

# Motorists and Cyclists: Sharing Georgia's Roads

**In Georgia, motorists and cyclists share the road. Both have equal rights and responsibilities to obey all traffic laws. All road users should show respect and consideration to each other.**

## Bicycles & Traffic Violations

A cyclist has all the rights and responsibilities applicable to the driver of any other vehicle except when specifically regulated by law or when certain regulations, by their nature, cannot apply to bicycles.

Cyclists who violate traffic laws will be subject to the same penalties as drivers of motor vehicles, except that no penalty points shall be assessed against the cyclist's driver's license.

## Tips for motorists

Motorists also have a responsibility to act in ways to make the roads safer for all users. Please consider the following points as

you share the road with pedestrians and bicyclists. Scanning for pedestrians and bicyclists should be a normal part of your driving routine as is scanning for other cars and trucks. Extra care should be taken when exiting alleys and driveways since pedestrians and bicyclists may be approaching from your left and right.

**At intersections:** Bicycles using the road should function much in the same way as traffic. Being slower moving vehicles, bicycles stay to the right most of the time, but there are exceptions. For example, a cyclist can legally move to the left of a lane or into a left turn lane when preparing to make a left turn. They may take part or all of the lane. Be patient and allow them to make the turn. When completed, they'll be able to move back to the right side of the road giving the motorist room to pass.

## When passing a cyclist:

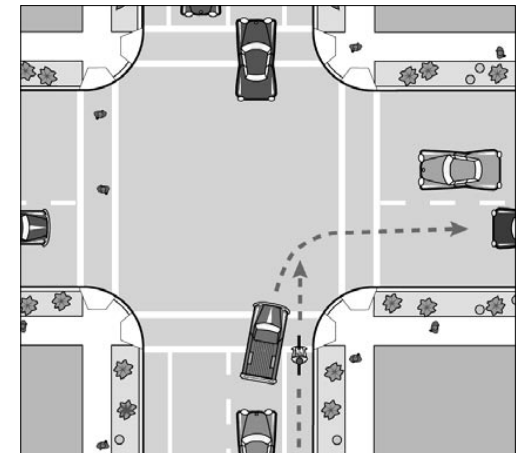
- **Allow at least three feet between your vehicle and the bicycle.** Just as the wind produced by a passing tractor-trailer can pull a car off course, so too can a passing car cause a cyclist to swerve out of control.
- **Be patient and wait until it is safe to pass,** as you would with any other slow-moving vehicle. Be aware that when a road is too narrow for cars and bikes to ride safely side by side, bicyclists

should ride in or near the center of the lane to discourage motorists from trying to pass them without enough clearance.

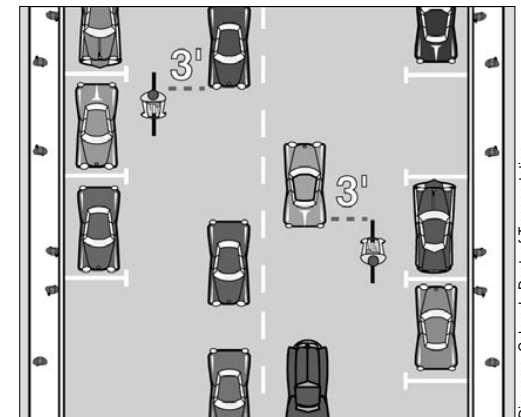
- **Tooting your horn is not recommended when passing cyclists.** If you feel that you must, do so in advance of passing, and from a friendly distance (several hundred feet), not from directly behind. You could startle cyclists and they might veer into your path, causing a crash.
- **Do not speed ahead and cut a cyclist off as you are turning right** when a cyclist is proceeding straight through an intersection. They may not be able to avoid a collision with the passenger side of your vehicle.
- **Do not harass or endanger a cyclist or pedestrian.** Harassment, which may include threats, taunting, or intimidation, is a misdemeanor offense (Georgia Code section 40-6-397 a). Reckless endangerment is also a misdemeanor offense and involves conduct which places another person at risk of personal injury. (Georgia Code section 40-6-397 b)

## Other points to remember

Contrary to popular belief, riding on sidewalks is not recommended for cyclists and in many areas it is illegal. In most cases, cyclists are not required to use multi-use paths even if they run alongside the



*A motorist making a right turn should yield to cyclists traveling straight through the intersection.*



*As a motorist, give cyclists some space as you pass. Try to leave at least three feet of clearance.*

roadway. Be prepared to encounter cyclists using the road. They are considered vehicles under Georgia traffic law.

**Give cyclists extra space as you pass.** Consider three feet a minimum. Unless traffic is heavy, it is usually possible for the cyclist to move a bit more to the right and the motorist to move out slightly to the left. This type of cooperation allows the motorist and the cyclist to safely share the road.

## Aggressive driving and harassment of cyclists



**40-6-397 (a)** A person commits the offense of aggressive driving when he or she operates any motor vehicle with the intent to annoy, harass, molest, intimidate, injure, or obstruct another person, including without limitation violating Code Section 40-6-42, 40-6-48, 40-6-49, 40-6-123, 40-6-184, 40-6-312, or 40-6-390 with such intent.

**(b)** Any person convicted of aggressive driving shall be guilty of a misdemeanor of a high and aggravated nature.